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ABSTRACT

The "limited effect" model originated by Lazarsfeld is not sufficient for full analysis of the political influences effected by television advertisements for candidates for political office. Newer political communication research indicates that, in both British and American politics, television political commercials have eroded party loyalty, have been able to influence positively viewers who have low ego-involvement in the message topic, have some possibility of influencing the uncommitted voter, and have a greater sophistication than ever before. Political messages on television tend to set agendas--create from whole cloth the political issues and the ranking importance of the issues. However, mass media, especially television, is currently tending to reduce creditability of the political system in the minds of citizens. Election participation will falter if this trend continues. (CH)

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# COMMUNICATION AND VOTER TURNOUT IN BRITAIN

Jay G. Blumler
Centre for Television Research
University of Leeds

and

Jack M. McLeod
Mass Communications Research Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Dr. Blumler is Research Director of the Centre for Television Research, the University of Leeds, where Professor McLeod, Chairman of the Mass Communications Research Center of the University of Wisconsin, was a Senior Visiting Fellow for the first half of 1973. The data presented were collected in collaboration with Dr. Denis McQuail, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Southampton, and Dr. T.J. Nossiter, Lecturer in Government, London School of Economics, who have also contributed at many points to the interpretation of findings. The authors especially wish to acknowledge the invaluable guidance received at all stages of the analysis from Mr. Arthur Royse, Senior Lecturer in Social Statistics of the Department of Sociology, University of Leeds. They are also indebted to Mr. Roger Appleyard, Research Assistant in the Department of Sociology, who assumed responsibility for all computer programming and processing, and to Miss Alison J. Ewbank, Research Assistant in the Centre for Television Research, for help in the data analysis.

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# COMMUNICATION AND VOTER TURNOUT IN BRITAIN

After two decades in which a "limited effects" model has dominated the study of the mass media in politics, the tide of scholarly opinion is shifting towards the elaboration of a more important, though more differentiated, role for communication factors in the political process. At this stage the empirical development of this "new look" is admittedly incomplete, for it still finds expression more often in critiques of past work, and in the generation of hypothetical frameworks to guide future studies, than in the production of supporting evidence. Nevertheless, its foundations are by no means merely speculative, and its evolution is sufficiently advanced to suggest that a definite turning point has now been reached in the field of political communication research.

Many features of the "limited effects" model originating as a set of tentative inferences in the pioneering investigation of Lazarsfeld et al in the Presidential campaign of 1940, subsequently became reified into the status of virtual laws and at times were generalized into showing little or no effect at all.[1] Six major characteristics of the "limited effects" model can be discerned. First, political communication research was regarded as virtually coterminous with persuasion research; investigators were chiefly concerned with associations between communication and attitudes underlying the direction of vote decisions.[2] Second, a reinforcement of previous orientations was regarded as the typical consequence of exposure to political communications; even the so-called "mediating factors" through which communications operated, were regarded as "such that they typically render mass communications a contributory agent...in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions".[3] Third, these reinforcing tendencies were believed to derive largely from a mechanism of selective exposure whereby people "turn to the propaganda which affirms the validity and

wisdom of their original decision."[4] Fourth, the model was part of an overall weltanschauung which put far more emphasis on the underlying stability of the world of politics than on its flux.[5] Fifth, although some individuals were unstable in outlook, their relative indifference to politics ensured that they monitored few of the potentially persuasive political messages. Finally, in many influential studies the conception of a communication effect was operationalized in relatively gross terms: associations were examined between no more than two or three variables; samples were dichotomized between "higher" and "lower" exposed audience members; and distinctions were rarely drawn between different individual media or patterns of content within a given medium.

## THE "NEW LOOK" IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

The "new look" in political communication research has begun to question each of the traits of the "limited effects" model. First the world of politics no longer appears so stable to contemporary researchers as it did to their predecessors. Dreyer's recent discovery of a steady and steep downward trend across five successive Presidential elections since 1952 in the capacity of party identification to predict vote direction graphically illustrates this transformation.[6] It has been suggested that a prime source of this trend may have been the substantial increase in the exposure of voters through the coming of television to short-term information flows making for greater volatility. And as traditional party ties lose their salience for more people, the potential for mass communications influence correspondingly widens.

Second, it is no longer taken for granted that selective exposure is the "natural" mechanism that guides much of the consumption of mass media

materials about political affairs. Reanalysis of past survey evidence has shown that the extent of such selectivity was much less than had been supposed, while a review of experimental evidence has failed to uncover the existence of a "general psychological preference for supportive information."[7] The implication is that selective exposure has been downgraded to the status of a variable from its previous elevation into the dignity of a supposed "law".

Third, a similar fate has partly overtaken the proposition that reinforcement is the dominant outcome of exposure to political communications. It is not denied that people with strongly held attitudes on a given topic are likely to emerge from communication exposure adhering to what they previously believed at least as tenaciously as before. Rather, more weight is now being given to the principle that when an individual's ego-involvement in a topic is low, then his defenses against communication about it are likely to be thin and weak. "The combination of a low degree of loyalty and yet some exposure to election communications has become a more probable combination in the era of television than ever before."[8]

Thus, fourth, the assumption that the potentially unstable citizen is unlikely to be reached by political communications has also become more dubious. Three different samples studied by the University of Leeds Centre for Television Research have disclosed substantial proportions (up to a quarter of the electorate) who possessed each of four attributes: they followed campaign communications "to help make up my mind how to vote"; they were relatively knowledgeable about politics; they viewed news and political programs on television relatively often; and yet they disclosed voting patterns, whether measured in the short-term period of an election campaign or in the longer span between campaign periods, of high volatility.

Fifth, there are some signs that more sophisticated methods are being introduced into political communication research. For example, there is more interest in tracing the influence of distinctive characteristics of specific media in the outlook of their heavy users. Wambley and Pride have recently listed a formidable array of television traits that lend support to their belief that it may be "qualitatively different in its effect from other news media."[9] Other evidence suggests that the readiness of newspapers editorially to support particular parties or candidates may at one and the same time help to sustain the allegiances of readers with previously congruent preferences and to undermine those of readers with originally divergent loyalties.[10] Some political communication researchers are once again adopting panel designs in which communication can provide a dynamic element, campaign change can be isolated and effects of the local media can be assessed. An understanding of the dynamics of change is enhanced by using in these longitudinal studies more sophisticated techniques of measurement and analysis. Cross-lag correlation procedures have been used in an attempt to extricate us from the causation direction problem that arises when associations of communication with other variables must be interpreted. More studies are resorting to multivariable procedures to extract effects of communication from a host of associated third variables. Attempts to specify a wider and more sensitive range of independent variables of communication can be anticipated, including more graduated indices of exposure, the direction or bias of content received, and the amount, sources, heterogeneity or homogeneity of politically relevant interpersonal communication engaged in. With the recent burst of empirical investigation of audience gratifications, possibilities have also arisen for injecting measures of needs sought in political communication behavior as variables intervening between exposure and effects.[11]

Last, but by no means least, the "new look" has moved well beyond the earlier almost exclusive concern of political communication research with persuasion through attitude change to a consideration of other more likely, if often more subtle, dependent variables as effects. For voting behavior, this involves a shift away from party direction as the main focus of interest and towards such possible criteria of effects as:

1) Information gain.[12]

2) Perceptions of the state of majority opinion in the community on topics of current controversy.[13]

3) Cognitive shifts in the perceived importance of issues - the particularly active research front of "agenda setting."[14]

4) Altered perceptions of political reality (e.g. whether the U.S. is winning the war in Vietnam, what it is like to be a Black American residing in urban ghettos, the causes of strike behavior).[15]

5) Cognitions about the nature of one's political system or community (e.g., whether it works well, its leaders are credible, etc.)[16]

6) Turnout at the polls.

## VOTER TURNOUT RESEARCH

Electoral turnout provides a particularly important criterion for investigating communication effects in the spirit of the new approach. The manifest function of campaigning is to furnish citizens with motives for casting a ballot and information on which to base their voting decisions. National campaigns invariably unleash a substantially stepped-up flood of political messages into the homes of the media-attending public. Especially where turnout levels tend to fall below near-universal participation rates, or fluctuate over time, communication could be expected to exert an influence. And in some polities there has been recent evidence of a

secular trend, in which communication factors may be implicated, towards lower turnout levels; in Britain, for example, participation has declined steadily from 84% at the 1950 General Election to 72% in 1970. Finally, the relationship of communication to turnout has a bearing on the great divide between those authorities who regard the mass media as agents of political involvment and citizen mobilization[17] and those who see them as instruments of narcoticization and citizen apathy.[18]

The role of communication in turnout has received some attention in past research. Possibly for technical reasons, however, findings have been divergent and difficult to interpret. In these circumstances the "limited effects" thesis has tended to prevail - as in the recent statement of Dowse and Hughes that '...at best the nature of the electoral campaign...does not very significantly affect the turnout'.[19]

It is true that in the 1948 Presidential election campaign Berelson et al found higher voting rates among respondents with 'high' rather than 'low' media exposure when prior interest in the campaign was controlled.[20] Nevertheless, in conceptualizing the role of the campaign they referred to a process of 'implementation', whereby early dispositions were subsequently translated into 'a response to the demands of society for a vote in November'.[21] This notion derived in turn from the Lazarsfeld et al discussion of the impact of a campaign on voting in terms of 'activation'. In their words, 'Political campaigns are important primarily because they activate latent predispositions.' The process was likened to photographic developing, according to which the photograph exists on an exposed negative but does not appear until the developer acts to bring it out.[22] Of course the ultimate implication of this view is that full information about prior dispositions would reduce correlations between communication and turnout to

near-zero levels.

Subsequently, the coming of television prompted further efforts to identify its distinctive impact on voting - largely with negative results. Simon and Stern reported data from Iowa showing that in counties with a high density of television sets turnout in the Presidential election of 1952 was no greater than in those where television was less widely diffused.[23] Strictly speaking, however, this result merely indicated that aggregate turnout was not augmented by the addition of a new communication channel to those already in existence. Glaser's analysis of national survey data for the 1956 and 1960 Presidential elections did disclose some associations between mass media use and turnout - greater for newspaper reading than for television viewing or radio listening. But it proved difficult to resolve the conflict between two rival interpretations of those associations: that communication had boosted turnout; or simply that the different life-styles of voters and non-voters included different communication behaviors.[24]

A more recent study by Olsen did involve a multi-variate assessment of diverse influences on the voting rates of Indianapolis residents in the 1966 Congressional and 1964 and 1960 Presidential elections. This showed that eta correlations between mass media use and turnout rates in the three elections fell to low and only barely significant levels (a mean correlation of .13) when controls for age, education, degree of organizational participation and relevant political orientations (party identification and political interest) were applied. However, contacts with local party campaigners were mixed with mass media measures in the communication exposure index; and the dependent variable was not change in respondents' participation intentions over a campaign period but whether in the end they had recalled voting or not.[25]

Even such a brief review of the literature shows how difficult it is

to arrive at anything other than the ambiguous conclusion that communication may or may not affect turnout. The main obstacles to progress seem to include: the rarity of controls for the influence of other non-communication variables, despite the plausibility of the assumption that many situational and dispositional characteristics will determine any form of participation; lack of precision in defining communication variables; and a failure adequately to represent in study designs the dynamics of any processes that might be involved in the impact of communication on turnout.

## INTRODUCTION TO A STUDY OF TURNOUT IN A BRITISH ELECTION

The British General Election of 1970 provided the focus for a study of "Political Communication and the Young Voter" conducted by the Centre for Television Research of the University of Leeds.[26] Interviews were held just before and immediately following the 18-day campaign with a main sample of 521 young adult electors (aged 18 to 24) and a control sample of 191 older adults drawn from names on the electoral registers of the six constituencies of the city of Leeds. In addition, those panelmembers who were still available were interviewed for a third time approximately eighteeen months later. The investigation was based on the assumption that many youth-adult differences in political outlook and behavior would be found, including an expectation that first entrants to the electorate would prove more malleable in their political views than their elders and more open to influence from campaign communications.

Before going into other details of the study, certain differences between British and American election campaigns should be mentioned. British campaigning is formally restricted to the 18 days prior to the designated Polling Day. In the present case, we are dealing with a snap election called by the incumbent Labor government only a few weeks before the outset of the

campaign; as a result, the first round interviews are more purely unaffected by campaigning than is possible in studies of more extended American elections. The Parliamentary system entails casting a vote for a party candidate in a particular constituency rather than for the party leader; however, the specific characteristics of the local candidates appear to have little effect on voting in a General Election. More significant is the greater status polarization of the British political system plus the existence of a moderately politicized national press system that divides the audience sharply along social class lines. The role of television is enhanced by a saturation of political communication during the short campaign that includes the prime-time showing of party broadcasts on both BBC channels and on the commercial network simultaneously.[27] This undoubtedly makes televized political communication much harder to avoid.

The characteristics of the Leeds samples also contrast sharply with comparable groups of voters in the United States. For example, 77 per cent of the older adult sample had left school before the age of 16 and only 12 per cent were still in school when they were 17. Although the younger sample's educational level was well below that of their American age cohorts, they did reflect the national trend toward increased education in Britain. Thirty per cent were still in school at age 17 and only 44 per cent had dropped out before 16.

Along with the 1948 Presidential election in the United States, the 1970 British General Election has been a focus for heated controversy regarding the validity of public opinion polling. In each case, the winner was shown to be behind in most polls taken even well into the campaign. Although post mortems have recommended modifications of polling practice, it is also considered that late voting shifts account for some portion of the apparent discrepancy.[28]

It is clear that signs in pre-campaign opinion polls of a considerable Labor Party lead over the Conservatives had much to do with the decision of the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, to call a snap election allowing the minimum period of a month between the announcement and Polling Day. However, the snap election strategy backfired, and the Labor government gave way to a Conservative administration under Edward Heath. Table 1 gives some support to the interpretation that Labor strength eroded during the campaign (at least in Leeds) as evidenced by 8 and 5 per cent Labor declines in the two samples. It is important to note, however, that Conservative Party support did not increase as a result of Labor's weakness. Instead the net direction of shift, when pre-campaign vote intentions were compared with Polling Day reported votes, was away from participation, the proportions abstaining having gone up from 15 to 26 per cent in the youth sample and from 9 to 19 per cent among older adults. Inspection of panel studies conducted in Britain since the war confirms this as an unprecedented result, most previous research having reported about as many would-be participants at the start of the campaign as actual voters at the end of it.[29]

Table 1 about here

The 10 and 11 per cent shifts in participation rates shown in Table 1 are, of course, net change proportions. The total amount of movement is better estimated in Table 2 which shows that 34 per cent of the young electors and 24 per cent of the older respondents had changed (switched parties, moved from abstention to voting, or did the reverse) during the campaign. In both samples more than half the changes were accounted for by a group whom we have termed "contingent abstainers", those individuals who had a pre-campaign intention but failed to vote on Polling Day.

Table 2 about here

## STUDY DESIGN

The study's panel design made it possible to classify variables in terms of time-dimension relationships. The key criterion for our analysis, turnout, was divided into two different dependent variables, depending on a comparison of the respondents' participation intentions at the outset of the campaign with their voting behavior on Polling Day. One of these involved the distinction, among pre-campaign intenders, between those electors who subsequently did and did not vote.[30] Because of the large number of contingent abstainers in the samples and the lack of attention paid to disintegrating voting intentions in previous research, the first and most intensive analyses were devoted to this criterion. The results were then compared with those that emerged when 'late decision', that is movement from lack of a pre-campaign party preference to a Polling Day vote, was treated as an alternative measure of the incidence of the campaign on turnout. Here the dependent variable rested on the distinction, among pre-campaign "don't know's" and "won't vote's", between those respondents who ultimately voted or did not vote. All analyses were performed for the first-time young electors; the numbers available meant that in the older adult sample only a contingent abstention analysis could be conducted.

The analytic separation of respondents between those with and without voting intentions is analogous to the distinction made in cognitive consistency theory between the states of post-decisional dissonance and pre-decisional conflict. It also implies that to some extent the corresponding voting and abstaining groups which they produce on Polling Day should differ in various antecedent characteristics and behaviors; for example, contingent abstainers should differ from consistent abstainers and late deciders should differ from consistent voters. Table 3 shows data relevant to this supposition. While the two groups of Polling Day non-voters are similar on

many characteristics, the contingent abstainers, as contrasted to the consistent abstainers, were more likely to come from working-class backgrounds, to be male, to have stronger political dispositions, and to show higher levels of mass media and interpersonal communication behavior during the campaign. Late deciders, as contrasted to those having made their decisions prior to the campaign, were more likely to be occupationally mobile, unmarried, less highly politicized and more dependent upon friends as sources of information during the campaign. In short, there was some external evidence to justify separate analyses of voter turnout distinguished by pre-campaign intention. To put it another way, since contingent abstainers, for example, really did differ from consistent abstainers at the start of the campaign, it became meaningful to enquire in further analysis a) why their original voting intentions had disintegrated and b) whether campaign communication factors had played any part in this.

Table 3 about here

To answer such questions, a number of independent variables that might have influenced turnout had to be built into the analysis. These were also ordered by time sequence differences. Thus, a broad distinction was drawn between pre-campaign measures, the background and situational factors, and the "usual" attitudes and behaviors, that the person brings to the election; campaign exposures, how the individual followed the election in mass media and inter-personal channels; and post-election reactions to the campaign in various respects.

The choice of individual predictor variables was based on four criteria: previous research had shown them to be related to political participation (e.g. stratification variables and various political dispositions); they represented potentially important differences in the situations occupied specifically by young people (e.g. marital status, politicization of the

parental home); they measured exposure to various sources of communication about the campaign; or they stood for more specific orientations to party conflict. A total of 40 predictor variables was selected by these criteria, of which 28 were classified as pre-campaign factors and the remainder were evenly divided between campaign exposure and post-election reaction measures. Since our interest was in estimating the relative importance of types of variables rather than in the predictive powers of any individual variable, the 40 items were finally subsumed under 12 more general classes, which are specified below. (The letters and numbers beside the category headings correspond to designations used in all subsequent tables of this paper. Details of how each of the individual variables was measured are presented in the Appendix.)

Pre-campaign Measures

A.) Parental characteristics - interest in politics; having a party preference.

B1) Stratification variables - own occupation; father's occupation; school-leaving age.

B2) Other structural variables - sex; marital status; age.

C1) Political system dispositions - knowledge; interest; duty to vote; caring about election outcome and eight other attitude items.

C2) Party orientations - attitudes to own party; to own party leader.

C3) Issue salience - importance of issues in three different clustered areas.

C4) Customary media behaviors - frequency of television viewing; newspaper reading;

D.) Cross-pressure variables[31] - reading of opposition newspaper, political contacts with supporters of opposing party; living in constituency with predominance of opposing party.

Campaign Exposure Measures

E1) Mass media exposure - number of party broadcasts seen; TV news viewing during campaign; amount of election news reading in the press.

E2) Interpersonal discussion - frequency of campaign discussion with: friends; family members; others.

Measures of Post-Election Reaction

F.) Campaign change in issue salience - prices; taxes; standard of living.

G.) Other post-election assessments - evaluations of specific features of the campaign ('campaign reaction score'); noticing campaign promises by the winning party; perceived strength of the economy.

A zero-order correlation matrix of the associations in the youth sample between these predictors and the retention or dissolution of original voting intentions confirmed the need to base the analysis on multivariate procedures. Nearly a half of the 40 independent variables produced statistically significant correlations with turnout. Some moderately high intercorrelations among some of the predictor variables themselves also called for multiple controls. It was decided, therefore, that the direct and independent contribution to turnout of each of the predictor variables, and of the classes into which they had been grouped, should be assessed by means of a multiple linear regression analysis.

This decision entailed a number of troublesome assumptions. One is that of a continuous distribution underlying the variable being measured. The criterion variable here, voter turnout, is measured as a dichotomy. That is, the person either voted or failed to vote in the 1970 election. It may be argued that the linear assumption of the regression model refers to an underlying propensity and hence to the conceptual definition of the dependent variable rather than to its measurement. Thus, a tendency to vote rather than abstain could still be thought of as a continuum on the

conceptual plane. It is true that the AID (automatic interaction detector) approach, which was designed especially to work with dichotomous categories of variables and their interactions, could have been adopted as an alternative; but it has features which disqualified it for use in this case.[32] It functions on the principle of maximising prediction among a given number of factors, without concern for the operation of particular sets of independent variables; this would have been at odds with our specific interest in understanding the role of communication influences per se. It also applies an iterative procedure, which extracts all variance from the strongest predictor and then selects subsequent predictors from the residual variance, whereas our goal required simultaneous rather than sequential control techniques.

A second assumption of regression analysis is that all relationships are linear and that no interaction effects have been generated by the joint operation of two or more predictor variables. To the extent that the regression model can account for substantial proportions of variance (as shown in data below), the extra variance likely to stem from interactions may be considered negligible. In any case, the regression analyses presented here should be regarded as provisional linear estimates; more precise interaction effects will be examined in future cross-tabular analyses of two and three predictor variables in their relations to voter turnout.

A final assumption of concern is that of independence among the predictor variables. When there are high inter-correlations among a combination of predictor variables, a condition of multicollinearity occurs in which the estimate of the variance accounted for by any one of the variables involved may prove unreliable. This difficulty can be dealt with either by combining the inter-correlated variables into a single index or by treating them as a block or group in the analysis.[33] The latter course has been followed here. Were such correlations to be found across blocks

(say, between a communication and a political predisposition variable) a serious problem would arise. Fortunately, all cross-group correlations in our analysis fell well within acceptable limits. The lone within-group correlation of sizeable magnitude appeared in the set of stratification variables, where occupational status was highly correlated with school-leaving age. These should be considered as a common status variable, and no attention should be paid in the results to which one contributes to the turnout variance and which disappears.

Our regression analyses were solely designed to estimate the independent power of a given variable to predict voter turnout directly. From the standpoint of communication theory, however, we were also interested in developing an understanding of indirect paths to turnout - such as the factors that give rise to those communication behaviors that may in turn affect voting rates, or the way in which communication behaviors may lead to other consequences which have a direct connection to turnout. Such indirect paths were examined by conducting a further series of regression analyses centering on all variables found to have sizeable direct paths to turnout. The implied time order sequencing of our predictor variables, starting with earlier parental influences and ending with campaign reactions, allowed some systematization of our approach. We began with the direct path latest in the time order and used all logically prior variables as predictors. We then worked our way back through the model attempting to identify the antecedents of all key variables. Standardized regression coefficients (beta weights) were used to index the resultant paths.

## TURNOUT REGRESSION ANALYSES: YOUNG PRE-CAMPAIGN VOTE INTENDERS

The first regression analyses of the study sought to explore the sources of contingent abstention in the youth sample. The dependent variable dis-

tinguished among original vote intenders between those who had eventually voted and those who had abstained. The numbers available in the sample permitted separate analyses to be performed for original Labor and Conservative supporters, respectively, thereby allowing for the possibility that different influences had played on young voters depending on their party of initial preference. The function of the regression analyses is to show the association of each predictor variable with turnout when the effects of the 39 other predictors are removed. The results are expressed in Table 4 as proportions of the variance accounted for by each variable singly and by the classes of variables into which they were grouped.

Table 4 about here

The inclusion of 40 predictor variables in a regression analysis obviously increases the likelihood that chance alone would have produced a substantial prediction of our turnout criterion. For that reason it was important to test the results against chance. The total proportions of variance accounted for (43 per cent for Labor and 77 per cent for Conservative young adults) were well in excess of chance in each case.[34]

Our first concern in examining the detailed regression results shown in Table 4 was to see whether the communication variables used as predictors would disappear when other factors were controlled. It is apparent that they did not disappear. The amount of exposure to certain sources of political communication seemingly acted, independently of other influences, to promote young voter turnout and/or reduce abstention among party identifiers.

When in Table 5 we treat as a block all ten variables in the analysis that measured some form of communication behavior (including customary media use and communication cross-pressures as well as variables of exposure to the campaign through mass media and inter-personal sources),

we find that the total variance accounted for (13 per cent for Labor and 28 per cent for Conservatives, both statistically significant at the .01 level) is on average well above that of the other 30 non-communication measures. Although on this reckoning a quarter of the variables are relevant to communication, they account for between a third and two fifths of the explanatory power of all 40 predictors in the two samples.

Table 5 about here

The relative power of communication factors appears yet more impressive when we consider some of the other variables in the analysis that did not predict voter turnout. Although attitudes toward the two major political parties and the images of their leaders were both highly related to direction of vote at both the pre-campaign and post-election interviews, these variables did not seem to produce the behavioral result of actually going to the polls. Similarly, the respondent's having grown up in a political or non-political home seems to have had little impact on turnout. Age, marital status and sex also seem to be relatively unimportant factors. So far as sex was concerned, it is worth noting, however, that somewhat more of the contingent abstainers were men. Although this may have been a chance result, it could also signify some diminution of sex-role related behavior among young people.

Reflecting Britain's status-polarized political system, the Labor and Conservative direction of voting intention was rather strongly related to the stratification variables used in the analysis (father's and own occupation, school-leaving age). These variables, however, played a different role in identifying the contingent abstainers, the three measures accounting for 17 per cent of the Conservative turnout variance but only three per cent among the Labor intenders. Erosion of the Conservative vote came heavily at the bottom of its status distribution whereas Labor's turnout problem was more evenly distributed. Thus, the direct impact of

stratification was mixed and certainly did not eliminate the communication variables when introduced as controls.

Whereas the specific partisan political attitudes added little to our understanding of "post-decision" young elector turnout, the more general political system dispositions appeared to play a much greater part. Political knowledge and interest, a feeling of an obligation to vote and caring about the election all were associated with turnout on Polling Day. For young people at least, electoral turnout seems to represent a quite different type of behavior from voting choice even when the hard-core consistent abstainers have been excluded from consideration. Direction seems to be more a matter of specific ties to a particular party, while turnout is much more a function of diffuse attachment to the political system.

Up to this point we have established that the ten communication variables considered as a block have a direct and sizeable connection with voter turnout; however, we have not considered the role of the communication measures taken individually. In the zero-order correlational analyses conducted before turning to multivariate procedures, all ten communication variables had produced statistically significant associations with turnout for at least one party. The regression results, however, present a more selective and differentiated picture. Campaign exposure variables (E1a-c and E2a-c) account for considerably more variance than do "pre-campaign communication behaviors (C4a, C4b); interpersonal communication assumes a greater direct role than do mass media measures, although the latter show some influence; and Labor turnout was predicted by a rather different subset of communication variables than was Conservative turnout.

One outstanding feature of the analysis is its emphasis on frequency of political discussion in the respondent's family as the most effective

prop to participation among communication factors and as one of the two most powerful predictors among the total set of 40 variables. The primacy of family discussion implies, not only that interpersonal communication is more influential than mass communication, but also that it is more likely to provide an effective stimulus when communication takes place within a relatively homogeneous family circle (although alternative explanations of its superiority may also need to be entertained).

Despite the prominence of interpersonal communication, mass media variables also had some effect on turnout. The original Conservative supporters, for example, were exceptionally vulnerable to the detaching influence of what we have called "press cross-pressures" (D1). This variable was indexed by a conflict between the respondent's original vote intention and the editorial line followed by his morning newspaper. At this point, it is not clear whether the process underlying this apparent source of influence was "agenda setting" - the content salience of a particular set of issues - or some more direct form of persuasion through attitude change. Of course, it may also reflect the vote-sustaining influence of reading a consonant newspaper by those eventually going to the polls. Whatever the process, it appears that press cross-pressures did not affect young Labor supporters. The possible reasons for this will be discussed later.

Table 4 also indicates a very substantial difference in the origins of voter turnout between the supporters of the two major political parties. While almost three-fourths of the variance accounted for in Conservative turnout could be attributed to pre-campaign variables (A,B,C,D), Labor turnout was much more a function of the campaign itself with half the attributable variance going to forces exerting influence after the start of the election contest. As indicated especially by levels of post-election assessments (G), this meant that a sizeable number of young Labor intenders, having registered uniquely unfavorable impressions of the campaign,

eventually failed to vote on Polling Day. In fact their campaign evaluations were not only more critical than those of the consistent Labor voters and of the consistent and contingent Conservatives; they were even more negative than those of the consistent abstainers. We will consider the significance of this point further in the discussion section of this paper. But overall the results validate the original decision to look at influences on turnout in separate party sub-groups. A greater part of Conservative abstention could have been predicted in advance from knowledge of the sample members' pre-campaign situations and dispositions; Labor supporters were more affected by what, to some of them at least, had proved to be a disenchanting campaign.

## TURNOUT PATH ANALYSES AMONG YOUNG PRE-CAMPAIGN WAVERERS

Our regression analyses sought to identify direct links between various groups of predictor variables and the criterion of electoral turnout. The purpose of our subsequent path analyses was to develop a tentative extension of these connections into a more elaborate causal network of various indirect paths to turnout. Although there is an almost infinite number of plausible causal sequences that could operate among the variables, we were fortunate in being able to reduce them to more manageable proportions by again ordering them in time-sequence terms.

In each party sub-sample, regression analyses were performed on eight variables at three logical time points preceding the final turnout criterion. The diagram below illustrates the sequence that was followed from right to left. First, all parental and structural variables in the analysis, (A,B) were regressed on three dispositional variables that had predicted turnout directly (C1a, C1b, and C1d); then the dispositional measures were placed as predictors with the parental and structural variables and regressed on three

different forms of exposure to the campaign (E1a E1b and E2a); and finally all the above variables were regressed on two different measures of campaign assessment ( G1 and G3 ) that had been implicated in the sample's turnout developments.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All parental and structural variables | Duty to vote<br>Political knowledge<br>Caring about the election outcome | Party election broadcasts seen<br>Family discussion<br>Election news-reading in the press | Campaign Reaction Score<br>Assessment of the strength of the economy | Turnout |

To index the strength of connection between two variables, standardized regression or path coefficients (beta weights) were used. Although many of the results were statistically significant at the .05 level, they were often of lower magnitude than would be required to make strong causal statements about the paths involved. Several reasons could account for this: some measures may have been less powerful than they could have been; individual variables have not been combined to strengthen associations (e.g. the three stratification measures might have been merged into one index); or young people in the process of change may in fact be subject to a diverse array of only moderately strong influences rather than to a small number of more potent ones.

Provisional path models for the Labor and Conservative sub-samples are presented in Figures 1 and 2. Lines of connection have been drawn where the path coefficients reached .15, but a few exceptions to this threshold are included for substantive interest. The results are best described by working our way "chronologically" through the models, commenting on the paths stemming from each set of variables of importance.

Figures 1 and 2 about here

The parental political characteristics that had only negligible direct connections with turnout reveal indirect paths such that high

parental interest leads to both caring about the election outcome and to family discussion. Both of these dispositions are associated in turn with higher turnout.

The stratification variables, already shown to have a direct path to Conservative turnout, also reveal indirect paths to political knowledge levels and caring about the election outcome in both parties. It is interesting to note, however, that no indirect path connected the stratification variables with any of the campaign exposure measures. In that sense the campaign communication effects on young elector turnout could be said to have been "democratically" based.

Among other structural variables, age is involved in the analysis largely through its connection with political knowledge in both sub-samples and, among Conservatives, in the fact that older respondents cared more about the election and felt a greater obligation to vote. Sex is interesting here for its connection with two seemingly contradictory paths; males are more likely to be politically knowledgeable, which encourages turnout, but are less likely to feel a duty to vote, which makes voting less likely. The chief indirect effect of marital status arises from the fact that the married respondents had entered into family discussions about the election more often than did the single respondents.

All three political system dispositions had provided at least moderate direct paths to voting. In terms of indirect paths, political knowledge encouraged party broadcast viewing, which in turn facilitated voting especially among the young Labor supporters. Among the young Conservatives, the better informed were also inclined to discuss the election more often with other family members. Caring about the election was also an indirect source of campaign communication effects on voting, being associated with party broadcast viewing in the Labor sub-sample and with family discussion among the Conservatives. Duty to vote, however, is an

interestingly isolated dispositional variable. It is neither predicted by antecedent variables nor predicts any consequent variables. Its effect, then, is direct, and its sources remain an intriguing area for future investigation.

Although frequency of family discussion was associated with more positive assessments of the campaign among the young Conservatives, there were no indirect paths from the communication variables to post-election reactions in the crucial Labor sub-sample where such assessments had been related to turnout. In fact, two features of these evaluations are exceptionally interesting. First, our so-called "campaign reaction score" measure was strikingly unassociated with most other variables in the analysis. The regression of 19 prior variables on campaign reaction scores managed to explain only 13 per cent of Labor and 15 per cent of Conservative variance. The circumstances which helped to determine the amount of exposure to campaign communications, then, were remarkably unconnected with judgments of how valuable the campaign had been. But second, the path analyses show that in both sub-samples it was actually the more knowledgeable respondents who had produced the more critical campaign reaction scores. As we have already seen, among the original Labor supporters, these negative assessments had led in turn to abstention from voting.

## YOUNG VOTER VS. OLDER ADULT TURNOUT COMPARISON: PRE-CAMPAIGN INTENDERS

All turnout analyses up to this point have dealt solely with first-time electors under age 25 who had indicated a party preference in the pre-campaign interview. From these data alone, we have no way of estimating the extent to which the findings are a) a function of youth or b) confined in application to the post-decision situation. External validity requires a comparison with older adults and with those who were undecided about party

in the first round of interviews. Sample size restricts our ability to do this with only 161 adults with pre-campaign party intent and only 76 young and 15 older adults with no such intent. The small number of older respondents prevents analysis within the two major political parties; however we can make the necessary age comparisons by combining the pre-election adherents of the two major parties. The outcomes of the resulting "mixed" regression analyses of contingent abstention for the two age samples are presented in Table 6.

The merging of the party groups in the young adult sample produced a sharp decline in the predictive power of our 40 variables. The 36 per cent of the total variance accounted for is less than the explanatory power of these same variables for each party sub-sample examined separately. This confirms that pre-campaign party preference was itself a source of variance in the combined analysis that is removed when Labor and Conservative intenders are separated. It is another indication of the inference made earlier that somewhat different forces acted on the supporters of the two parties in affecting turnout. The decline was particularly noticeable for the stratification measures.

Table 6 about here

Table 6 provides a somewhat equivocal answer to the question of whether the importance of communication for young elector turnout would be replicated among older voters. Campaign exposure explained ten per cent of the variance in the merged young elector sample and four per cent in its older adult equivalent. For all ten communication variables, these figures rose to 14 per cent and five per cent, respectively, a level that was certainly not statistically significant in the adult case. It is not possible completely to dismiss the relevance of communication to the turnout of established voters on the basis of these data, however, since some part of its impact may have been suppressed by the necessary merging of

prior party differences in a combined sample. Nevertheless, communication was clearly less important for the electoral participation of older voters than for those coming on to the voting register for the first time, an outcome that is consistent with the investigation's original hypothesis about the greater susceptibility of young people to influence from campaign communication sources.

Two other age differences of some interest are evident in Table 6. First, the relative importance of partisan and political system dispositions is reversed such that the specific party attitudes account for much more of the variance in turnout among the older adults; we have already seen that the more general political system dispositions were very important for young adults in centrast to the negligible role of partisan concerns. Second, the non-stratification group of structural variables proved relatively important in the older adult analysis, whereas they were of little significance in the younger group. In fact, much of the difference was due to marital status; in the older sample the widowed, divorced and single respondents were much less likely to vote than the married.

## TURNOUT REGRESSION ANALYSIS: YOUNG PRE-CAMPAIGN NON-INTENDERS

Perhaps the most striking result of the analysis of young voters without a party preference at the start of the campaign is that their turnout on Polling Day was much better predicted than was that of the pre-campaign intenders. As shown in Table 7, about three fourths of the non-intenders' turnout variance was accounted for by the 37 predictor variables common to the two regression analyses; this compares with a figure of less than half that amount for those electors who had already chosen a party at the time of the first interview. Stated another way, we were more successful in measuring how "pre-decision conflict" had been resolved than we were

in explaining "post-decisional dissonance".

Table 7 about here

The previous finding of strong communication influences on young vote intenders is clearly replicated for the non-intenders in Table 7. The eight communication variables relevant to this group (cross-pressures having been omitted from the analysis for respondents without a prior party loyalty) accounted for a similar amount of the total variance: 14 per cent. However, involvement in interpersonal discussion of the election mattered less to the late deciders than to the contingent abstainers, while exposure to campaign communications in the mass media (especially in the press and to a lesser extent via televized party broadcasts) proved more influential. Insofar as interpersonal communication assumed a role in late decision, it centered more on discussion with friends than with family members. It is also interesting to find some confirmation in Table 7 of the importance of evaluations of the campaign itself in prompting electoral participation. Just as critical reactions to the campaign had distinguished contingent Labor abstainers from consistent party supporters, so too were more favorable assessments associated with the ultimate readiness of some previously undecided electors to vote.

The biggest difference between the regression analyses for original intenders and non-intenders arises from the remarkably powerful effect of various political system dispositions on the latter group, accounting in all for 39 per cent of the variance. Three individual measures stand out here: a feeling that the 18-year-old vote would make politicians pay more attention to young people (a variable unimportant in the contingent abstention analysis); an interest in politics; and caring about the outcome of the election. It may be important to note that political knowledge is no longer an effective predictor in this analysis, suggesting that motivation rather than cognitive competence is a key element in the behavior of

late deciding young voters. Despite the dominance of these general orientations, however, Table 7 also shows that party variables (chiefly differences in assessing the party leaders) predicted turnout among the initially undecided more strongly than among those with a pre-campaign preference. A final area of difference from the vote intender analysis is the virtually complete elimination of stratification and other structural variables as factors in predicting turnout directly. It seems that late decision among previously uncommitted voters is not organised along traditional stratification or role-determined lines.

## DISCUSSION

What conclusions may be reached from this study about the role of communication factors in voter turnout in the 1970 British General Election?

It is clear that communication variables bulked large in the main sample analysis of young first-time electors. Both interpersonal and mass communication influences had independently affected turnout when many other possible contaminating or confounding variables had been controlled. In the analysis of those young voters with a definite party preference at the start of the campaign, communication measures took up 13 per cent of the total variance for the turnout of original Labor supporters and 28 per cent of that for original Conservatives. Among young electors without an initial party preference, communication factors also amounted to 14 per cent of the total. In fact the strength of communication variables in predicting turnout compared favourably with that of all other types of independent variables included in the investigation, being definitely exceeded only by measures of prior dispositions in the late decision analysis of young voters.

The inference to be drawn here is important in view of the insignificant part typically allotted to communication by the "limited effects" model. When election participation behaviors are examined dynamically, and especially for individuals eligible to vote for the first time, communication matters just as much as anything else does. What is more, it matters beyond what would be ascribed to it if it was merely involved in activating prior leanings and sentiments, whether rooted in social or psychological origins. This is not the place for a detailed analysis of where the "limited effects" model went wrong, but from other evidence at our disposal we suspect that it exaggerated a) in general the homogeneity of the world of political influences, communication and extra-communication, that play on the typical citizen and b) more specifically, the amount of selective exposure in which most people engage in order to reinforce their previous leanings.

In addition, however, the role of communication factors proved more complex than any single image of how they might be related to turnout could adequately convey. From this point of view an important lesson of the study is the need in communication research to identify and differentiate the several different processes that may simultaneously impinge on a dependent variable outcome. This need for discrimination may be illustrated by elaborating further conclusions of the analysis at three different levels.

One level concerns the group characteristics of the particular individuals who may be exposed to political messages. According to our evidence communication factors worked differently among young Conservative and Labor supporters, only the former having proved vulnerable to "press cross-pressures", while only the latter were apparently guided by their subjective reactions to the quality of the campaign. The complex of communication influences varied yet again according to whether the group under scrutiny had been in a pre-decisional or post-decisional frame of

mind at the time of the pre-campaign interview, the former having responded more positively to the mobilizing influence of mass media sources and the latter to the participation-sustaining impact of family discussion (perhaps because only in the latter case was it logically possible for the family's party leanings to be congruent with the young voter's prior preference). In addition, the extent of communication influence varied as between members of the main youth sample and the adult controls, proving far more powerful in the former case.

This last result was to some extent expected. It may reflect certain features of the political outlook of young people - such as their relatively weak partisan sentiments and a loose internal structuring of their various political beliefs - which may stem in turn from such external factors in their situations as exposure to a diverse array of socialization agencies in preadult years and the recency and incompleteness of their occupancy of more adult statuses and roles. Even so the result may not be totally lacking in relevance for communication to older adults. As occupational and geographical mobility become more common, rates of social change accelerate, and public information flows increase, more and more adults may find themselves in circumstances not entirely dissimilar from those that made communication effects on young voters possible in the 1970 British General Election.

A second level where the study findings underline a need for discrimination concerns the direct impact of communication on turnout. Here we have been compelled to draw a distinction between three types of communication influence that may be exerted in a given situation. One form of such influence is directly <u>quantitative</u>; it manifests itself in a "more-the-more" relationship, with higher exposure rates independently producing higher turnout rates. Particularly interesting in this connection, perhaps, was the powerful effect of political discussion inside the family circles

of the young original vote intenders. Yet even here a mass medium like television did not pale into insignificance, for it also transpired that in this group party broadcast viewing and frequency of family discussion were quite closely associated with each other (the beta weights connecting these variables were .20 and .26 in the Labor and Conservative sub-samples, respectively). The impression conveyed is that television is a medium which, because of its essentially domestic character, can inject into the home environment materials that may be taken up for further comment - presumably with consequences for sustaining political participation afterwards.

Another form of communication influence may be termed relational; it stems from congruent and incongruent relationships between the party leaning of an individual and that which is inherent in one of his regularly received sources of messages. According to our evidence this highlights a sense in which a party-aligned press may be politically important: it helps to hold firm those individuals whose party preferences were initially consistent with its point of view and to loosen the loyalties of those who originally diverged from its line. But why did the detaching influence of reading the opposition press make itself felt only among our young Conservative respondents? A likely explanation emerged when it was found that subjection to press cross-pressures was positively and moderately related to political knowledge in the Labor sub-group and inversely and powerfully related to information levels among the young Conservatives. In other words, the looser articulation of the political outlook of the average Tory reader of a Labor newspaper, as indexed by his limited stock of political information, made him exceptionally vulnerable to influence. Contrariwise, being better informed, the typical Labor reader of Conservative papers could also draw on stronger internal defences against their onslaughts on his convictions.

Perhaps the most novel and intriguing form of communication influence represented in our findings was qualitative in character - as shown by the fact that unfavorable "campaign reaction scores" had been significantly and independently associated with the eventual abstention of original young Labor supporters and that favorable ones had accompanied the conversion of some would-be abstainers into Polling Day voters. This suggests that at election time some voters may not only be receiving the discrete bits of information about issues, policies and candidates that happen to come their way; at the same time they may also be forming, sustaining or modifying impressions of politicians in their roles as campaigners and of the campaign itself as a typical example of the country's political processes. Obviously such perceptions may vary in favorability, and at some point the creation of a positive or negative impression may strengthen or weaken the individual's inclination to vote. The fact that it was the better informed youth sample members who were more critical of British politicians' conduct of the 1970 campaign is noteworthy in this connection. It has often been suggested, but rarely demonstrated, that, in addition to the more typical band of apathetic abstainers, there might be some citizens who will have taken a quite deliberate, and as it were informed, decision not to vote. In the Leeds youth sample of 1970 such an element apparently began to make its presence felt.

Interpretation of this point is additionally complicated by the fact that only Labor's ranks of would-be supporters were thinned by unfavorable qualitative reactions to the campaign. We are not in a position to point to any particular feature of Labor propaganda, say, that could have provoked this result. Nevertheless, we were concerned to test further the related assumptions a) that some original Labor supporters eventually became disenchanted with the 1970 campaign and b) that they might well have voted if such disenchantment had not intervened.

The evidence in Table 8 is relevant to the first of these propositions. We reasoned that the disenchantment of the Labor contingent abstainers should have been reflected in declining rates of exposure to election propaganda as the 1970 campaign wore on in time. It so happened that one of our exposure variables did allow us to get inside the campaign, as it were, in terms of such a time dimension: our measure of the number of party broadcasts seen, which had been compiled from questions asked in the post-election interview about each program individually. Table 8 shows that the rate of exposure of the contingent Labor supporters to the very first Labor broadcast of the campaign was nearly as high as that of the consistent Labor supporters; but thereafter, and quite against all the viewing trends prevalent in all other sample sub-groups, their viewing of Labor broadcasts declined steadily until at the end of the election period it had dropped to approximately half the level attained by the consistent Labor voters.

Table 8 about here

Then, as a further check on the voting propensities of various youth sample sub-groups, including the contingent Labor abstainers, we looked at the longer-term (18-month) development of their party preferences (drawing on follow-up interviews with the respondents in autumn 1971). The results, which are presented in Table 9, do tend to single out the contingent Labor electors as individuals who could have been more interested in participation throughout their political careers had not the 1970 campaign "put them off". It can be seen that many members of the contingent Labor sub-group had reverted to their original stands at the time of the third interview, only five per cent having been unable to declare a party preference. In contrast to this readiness to snap back to their first round loyalties, the ex-Conservatives proved quite unstable, only 29 per cent having returned to the Tory fold, and as many as 33 per cent having become "don't know's" when asked about their party affiliations.

Table 9 about here

The adoption of path analysis has opened up yet another level where researchers should be alert to the possible existence of distinctions between diverse communication roles. In fact the evidence from this part of the study, though not strong in the power of the reported associations and certainly needing much replication, seemed to identify three relatively distinct routes along which the forces making for participation or inactivity among young people might gather momentum.

One such path linked together some of the elements that could be said to favor a relatively informed and competent style of participation. It mainly develops cognitive orientations to politics, and its deepest roots originate in stratification distinctions, which correlate highly with knowledge, leading in turn to communication behaviors that stimulate participation. But stratification variables did not monopolise this avenue's point of departure; the tendency for men and the over-21s to be better informed also associated sex and age with it. The mass media may occupy more of the center of this stream than do interpersonal communication sources.

A second type of path stemmed from situations where a circulation of political materials, leading seemingly to more affective attachments to the political system, is naturally encouraged. According to our evidence, the family circle plays a central part in blazing this particular trail. Thus, despite the irrelevance of the parental family's political background to turnout in a direct sense, it was found that the products of the more politically minded households had a) engaged more often in family discussion about the election (itself a powerful force for participation) and b) cared more about its outcome, a disposition which was also tied in, in turn, both with family discussion and with electoral turnout more

directly. Also associated with this set of forces was marital status, which encouraged the married voters to talk about the election more often and so to go to the polls at the end of the campaign.

A third path towards political activity proved rather more obscure, for our results did little more than suggest its existence without identifying many of its components. Nevertheless, in addition to certain cognitive and affective avenues to participation, there seems to be a route which builds more on a sense of civic obligation. Represented in our study by the influence on turnout of electors' acceptance of a duty to vote, this appeared to be almost a "free-floating" factor, neither strongly dependent on specific background variables inside the youth sample, nor mediated in its impact on voting by communication variables. It was simply there in the outlook of some electors, and when it was present it favored participation. There are some signs, however, that it develops strongly in association with advancing age[35] and that it appeals more often to women than to men.

In relation to all this an issue of external validity may be raised: how far can the outcomes of a study of one election in a particular nation, and in a single city of that nation at that, be generalized to other election situations in other countries? To this question three related responses seem appropriate. First, there is an impressive amount of in-study replication in the results. Communication factors, though differentially operative, were nevertheless definitely involved in turnout developments among several different sub-groups in the Leeds youth sample. Second, the significance of the findings inheres less in the details of their configuration than in the fact that they embraced so many different modes of communication influence. If turnout is not entirely determined by the operation of prior dispositions, then scope is afforded for quantitative, relational and qualitative communication forces to affect

participation rates as well - in which case efforts to trace their influence in other situations should prove worthwhile. Thus, third, doubts about generalizability can in the end be resolved only by replications elsewhere. From this point of view we look forward to the eventual publication of findings from on-going studies of the reactions of young American voters to the 1972 Presidential election campaign currently being conducted at the Universities of Wisconsin and Denver.

What guidelines, if any, might be drawn from the results of the Leeds study for the conduct of future research in the political communication field?

Methodologically, they support some of the tendencies that were associated in the opening section of this paper with the "new look" in political communication research. They illustrate the value of panel designs, in which campaign effects can be separated from pre-campaign influences, sensitive causal relationships between different types of variables can be traced, and key factors can be ordered by the passage of time. They confirm the need for multivariate analysis, so many variables having been initially related to turnout at the zero-order level of correlation. So far as the criterion of effect, the dependent variable of turnout, is concerned, the path analyses suggest that even this seemingly simple and readily identifiable act of going to the polls may be regarded as a form of multi-faceted behavior: we may be dealing with "informed turnout", "concerned turnout" and "obligatory turnout", as it were. The results also underwrite the need to refine our independent variable measures of exposure to political communication. Gross measures of total amount of exposure, or of the number of media used, would certainly have been too crude to capture the many interacting forces that operated on our samples. In the future additional refinements could be sought along the lines of: examining the role of the gratifications that underlie political

communication use; taking more account of the heterogeneity/homogeneity of interpersonal communication situations; and looking into the content of such forms of communication.

Some substantive implications of the Leeds research derive from three overall patterns in the findings. First, a developmental meaning inheres in the youth/adult difference over the relative importance for turnout of feelings about the political system at large and of attitudes to specific parties. Previous political behavior research had already suggested that "adolescents and young adults have not yet acquired the relatively durable partisan attachments more characteristic of mature persons".[36] Perhaps a further implication of our evidence is that many young people may first develop a sufficiently positive attachment to the political system to feel that, for example, elections are worth bothering about and voting makes sense. Socialization to specific party loyalties, however, is more of a life-long process and may start to yield more entrenched attitudes after the individual has cast his first vote. As this process continues, then, and people grow older, party attitudes gradually take over from system dispositions as more effective determinants of electoral participation. However, we still know little about the communication forces that are involved in this developmental sequence.

Another pattern in the evidence sounds a warning against relying exclusively on stratification factors when explaining communication behavior and its political consequences. Although social class distinctions undoubtedly distribute differential opportunities to citizens to become effectively active in politics, several other factors (marital status, sex, age, membership of a family circle in which some interest in politics is shown) may also favor attention to political communications and a readiness to become involved in civic affairs. If class horizontally stratifies people into graduated ranks according to the adequacy of their preparation

for competent participation, a number of other forces also impinge on the same individuals, as if from a vertical angle, somewhat diluting the effects of stratification on their relationships to the political system. Perhaps these other forces are most likely to be galvanized at election time.

This suggests that the rhythm of the political calendar has temporal implications of some importance. That is, election campaigns may be regarded not only as influential political events but also as distinctive communication events. Compared with the usual out-of-election period, the mass media transmit more political messages to their audiences at election time. More people are reached by political communications, in some cases against the grain of their initial dispositions. There are more stimuli to interpersonal discussion, and more numerous and purposive connections are forged between the mass media and face-to-face communication channels. It is as if an election campaign generates motivations, behaviors and processes of information acquisition that are less common at other times. It follows that the campaign is probably a particularly formative occasion for the politically less involved sector of the electorate.

Finally, the results of the Leeds study provoke many unanswered questions about political communication processes which could profitably be explored in detail as the field develops:

1) Does interpersonal and mass communication per se lead to turnout or is there an interaction with direction of content? The press cross-pressure result suggests the latter, but how far would this tendency be generalizable to other communication sources, such as television, the family environment and friendship circles? Is there, in fact, a mechanism of selective exposure which operates for certain individuals across diverse communication channels, and, if so, does a high degree of such selectivity have any bearing on participation?

2) Communication sources at odds with the individual's prior party preference were conceptualized in this study as cross-pressures. How do such communication cross-pressures operate in relation to others to which the individual may be exposed? Are they uniquely effective regardless of other conditions, or does the presence of at least one congruent source render incongruent ones impotent?

3) Why does family discussion act so powerfully to uphold election participation? Is the family the sort of group in which members develop a sense of joint responsibility and a shared decision to vote? Is it an arena of cognitive build-up leading to more participation? Does it offer a circle in which people can be more free to express their political emotions, thus generating an affect for participation?[37] Or is its characteristic political homogeneity the trait that chiefly helps to sustain turnout?

4) In the impact of mass communication on turnout, what part is played, respectively, by exposure that is deliberately motivated by political concerns, and by more incidental exposure stemming largely from either usual media use habits or availability factors? Insofar as incidental exposure is involved, does it lead to more informed turnout (knowledge gain allied to voting) or just directly to voting of a possibly less competent kind? The question has policy implications, for in Britain, despite the dislike of many viewers and producers, the availability of party broadcasts is maximized by their simultaneous transmission on all available television channels.

5) Why was there a surplus in the Leeds 1970 samples of shifts away from participation over shifts towards it? Regarded from the standpoint of this question, the results of this study are open to two interpretations. On the one hand, they may be regarded as a "one-off" outcome of the 1970 campaign as such. Some elections, it might be said, are more inspiring or

more dispiriting than others; and Britain's 1970 exercise simply happened to be one of the more dreary ones. On the other hand, in light of the known movements of gross turnout rates since the end of the war, it is tempting to discern the influence in the findings of some secular trends that may be helping to restructure either the political communication system itself or the way in which political messages transmitted through it are received.[38] Of course data from a single election study cannot resolve such an issue. Nevertheless, two factors have been identified in our analyses which might help to determine whether electors at one time would be prepared to go to the polls in the same numbers as on previous occasions. First, we can say that there is likely to be less participation when prior political system dispositions are less positive. This observation would hypothetically associate falling turnout rates with trend data suggesting that many political institutions in certain Western democracies are less esteemed by citizens nowadays than they used to be. Second, the discovery that "communication matters" for turnout suggests that election participation will falter if there is diminishing respect for political communication as such, diluting and inhibiting the mobilizing boost that it could otherwise administer. Table 10 presents some evidence on this point from British national samples contacted originally by the Audience Research Department of the BBC. This shows that over four successive General Elections between 1959 and 1970 there has been a distinct downward trend in popular appreciations of party broadcasts, possibly the prime vehicle of political propaganda in British campaigns.

Table 10 about here

In all this is it far-fetched to discern the emergent outlines of what might be termed a "post-industrial" political communication system?

FOOTNOTES

1. See Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard R. Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign, Revised Edition, Columbia University Press, New York, 1948 as well as Berelson, Lazarsfeld and William McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1954. The results were more firmly solidified in the literature review of Joseph Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication, Free Press, Glencoe, 1961.

2. It is a striking fact that Part I of Klapper's book (op. cit.) was subtitled "The Effects of Persuasive Communication". Since the rest of the volume dealt, respectively, with the effects of crime and violence in the media, the effects of escapist media materials, the effects of adult TV fare on child audiences, and with audience passivity, it is clear how completely the author had identified the investigation of political communications phenomena with research into persuasion.

3. Lazarsfeld et al (op. cit.) calculated that 53% of their Erie County sample had been reinforced by the 1940 election campaign by virtue of the stability of their vote intentions across several interviews. Although the authors also entered the explicit caveat that, "We cannot say for sure whether all the constants were really reinforced by the campaign" (p. 103), by Klapper's day the research was said to have "found" without qualification that "exposure to months of campaign propaganda...reinforced the original pre-campaign intentions of 53%" (p. 16).

4. Lazarsfeld et al, op. cit. p. 90.

5. One of the first points made in the Preface to the Second Edition of The People's Choice (Lazarsfeld et al, op. cit., p. xx) "concerns the stability of attitudes", the authors going on to point out that, "The subjects in our study tended to vote as they always had, in fact as their families always had."

6. Edward C. Dreyer, "Media Use and Electoral Choices: Some Political Consequences of Information Exposure", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 35, 1971-2, pp. 545-53.

7. David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman, "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 31, 1967, pp. 194-213.

8. Elihu Katz, "Platforms and Windows: Reflections on the Role of Broadcasting in Election Campaigns", Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 48, 1971, pp. 304-14.

9. Gary L. Wamsley and Richard A. Pride, "Television Network News: Re-Thinking the Iceberg Problem", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 25, 1972, pp. 434-50.

10. David E. Butler and Donald E. Stokes, Political Change in Britain: Forces Shaping Electoral Choice, Macmillan, London, 1969; John P. Robinson, "Perceiving Media Bias and the 1968 Vote: Can the Media Affect Behavior After All?" Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 49, 1972, pp. 239-46.

11. Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual", Arden House Conference on Directions in Mass Communications Research, New York, 1973; in press, Public Opinion Quarterly.

12. Steven H. Chaffee, L. Scott Ward and Leonard P. Tipton, "Mass Communication and Political Socialization", Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47, 1970, pp. 647-759, 666.

FOOTNOTES (contd.)

13. E. Noelle-Neumann, "Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media", Studies of Broadcasting, No. 9, 1973, pp. 67-112.

14. See Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 36, 1972, pp. 176-87, and Jack M. McLeod, Lee B. Becker and James E. Byrnes, "Another Look at the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press", paper submitted to this conference.

15. Wamsley and Pride, op cit.

16. See Jay G. Blumler, J.R. Brown, A.J. Ewbank and T.J. Nossiter, "Attitudes to the Monarchy: Their Structure and Development during a Ceremonial Occasion", Political Studies, Vol. 19, 1971, pp. 149-71. See also the measure of "sense of community" used by Joseph Adelson and R. O'Neil, "Growth of Political Ideas in Adolescence", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 4, 1966, pp. 295-306. Subtle dimensions of cognition are scored from open-ended responses to hypothetical problem situations. These have also been used with success in studies of adolescent political socialization by researchers at the Mass Communications Research Center, University of Wisconsin.

17. For a recent statement see Paul Burstein, "Social Structure and Individual Political Participation in Five Countries", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 77, 1972, pp. 1087-1110.

18. For the classic statement see Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action", in Lyman Bryson (Ed.), The Communication of Ideas, Harper & Bros., New York, 1948.

19. Robert E. Dowse and John A. Hughes, Political Sociology, John Wiley and Sons, London, 1972, p. 314.

20. Berelson et al, op. cit., p. 249.

21. Ibid, pp. 277-280.

22. Lazarsfeld et al, op.cit., p. 75.

23. Herbert A. Simon and Frederick Stern, "The Effect of Television upon Voting Behavior in the 1952 Presidential Election", American Political Science Review, Vol. 49, 1955, pp. 470-7.

24. William A. Glaser, "Television and Voting Turnout", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 29, 1965, pp. 71-86.

25. Marvin E. Olsen, "Social Participation and Voting Turnout: A Multivariate Analysis", American Sociological Review, Vol. 37, 1972, pp. 317-33.

26. The study was financed by a grant from the Social Science Research Council of Britain to the first author and to Dr. Denis McQuail, University of Southampton, and Dr. T.J. Nossiter, London School of Economics. The participation of the second author was made possible by grants from the same agency and from the Graduate School Research Committee of the University of Wisconsin.

27. Fourteen party election broadcasts were shown in the 1970 campaign. These were allocated roughly according to the number of parliamentary seats contested by each party: Labor 5, Conservative 5, Liberal 3 and Communist 1.

28. See report of investigating Committee, "Public Opinion Polling on the 1970 Election", Market Research Society, London, 1972.

29. The most strictly comparable studies were those conducted in Leeds during the 1959 and 1964 General Elections, for which findings were reported in Joseph Trenaman and Denis McQuail, Television and the Political Image, Methuen, London, 1971 and Jay G. Blumler and Denis McQuail, Television in Politics: Its Uses and Influence, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969.

30. Since the analysis was concerned with turnout rather than direction, inter-party switchers were merged with consistent party voters (after all their original intention to participate in the election had been followed by the casting of a vote). They amounted, however, to only 10% of the category of stable participants in the youth sample.

31. Cross-pressures constituted an ambiguous category in time-dimension terms. Though initially classified with the pre-campaign variables, their role in the analysis suggested a closer affinity with campaign influences.

32. See J. Sonquist, E. Baker and J. Morgan, Searching for Structure, Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, 1971.

33. N. Blalock, Social Statistics, Second Edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1972, p. 503.

34. Small proportions within these totals (six per cent and four per cent, respectively) represent aberrant results in the form of reverse outcomes for an individual variable within a cluster of related and consistent variables. This could be expected when so many interrelated variables are introduced as controls. To avoid confusion, we have eliminated such minor reversals from all regression analysis tables, treating them as if they had contributed noting to the criterion variance.

35. Only 33 per cent of the Leeds young elector sample accepted a duty to vote compared with 66 per cent of the older adult controls.

36. David O. Sears, "Political Behavior", The Handbook of Social Psychology, Second Edition, edited by Gardner Lindzey and Elliott Aronson, Vol. 5, p. 388.

37. This hypothesis is provoked by comments to be found in T.J. Scheff, "Inter-subjectivity and Emotion", American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 16, 1973, pp. 501-12.

38. For further discussion of recent developments affecting democratic political communication systems, see Harold Mendelsohn and Irving Crespi, Polls, Television and the New Politics, Chandler, Scranton, 1970.

TABLE 1

Pre-campaign Voting Intention and Post-election Voting Report in the 1970 General Election, Leeds Young Adult and Older Adult Samples

| Party | Young Adults | | | Older Adults | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre-campaign Intent % | Post-election Report % | Net Change | Pre-campaign Intent % | Post-election Report % | Net Change |
| Labor | 48 | 40 | -8 | 42 | 37 | -5 |
| Conservative | 28 | 26 | -2 | 40 | 40 | 0 |
| Liberal | 9 | 8 | -1 | 9 | 4 | -5 |
| Don't know, no vote | 15 | 26 | +11 | 9 | 19 | +10 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | | 100 | 100 | |
| (N) | (494)[a] | | | (176)[a] | | |

[a]Individuals unwilling to answer questions about vote intention and vote were omitted from these and subsequent tables.

TABLE 2

Voting Patterns Formed by Pre-campaign Intent and Post-election Report in the 1970 General Election, Leeds Young Adult and Older Adult Samples

| Pre-campaign Vote Intention? | Post-election Report as Voted? | Voting Pattern | Young Adults % | Older Adults % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | Yes | Consistent Voters[a] | 58 | 71 |
| Yes | Yes | Switching Voters[a] | 8 | 6 |
| No | Yes | Late Deciders | 8 | 4 |
| Yes | No | Contingent Abstainers | 18 | 14 |
| No | No | Consistent Abstainers | 8 | 5 |
| | | Total | 100 | 100 |
| | | (N) | (494) | (176) |

a Both groups stated an intention in the pre-campaign interview and reported voting in the post-election survey; however Consistent Voters reported voting for the party originally chosen while the Switching Voters voted for a different party.

TABLE 3

Levels of Various Predictor Variables by Voting Patterns, Leeds Young Adult Sample (as Percentages)[a]

| Predictor Variable | Voting Pattern | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Consistent Voters[b] | Switching Voters[b] | Late Deciders | Contingent Abstainers[b] | Consistent Abstainers |
| A. Parental Characteristics | | | | | |
| 1. Parental interest, political at least fairly | 74 | 72 | 76 | 72 | 81 |
| 2. Parental party preference with party | 83 | 79 | 54 | 77 | 58 |
| B. Structural Variables | | | | | |
| 1. Father's occupation non-manual | 46 | 44 | 30 | 25 | 42 |
| 1. Own occupation non-manual | 62 | 66 | 78 | 38 | 58 |
| 1. School-leaving age 16 or later | 58 | 60 | 73 | 39 | 42 |
| 2. Sex men | 48 | 33 | 46 | 58 | 39 |
| 2. Marital status married | 32 | 42 | 14 | 28 | 25 |
| 2. Age over 21 | 42 | 40 | 32 | 50 | 38 |
| C1. Political System Dispositions | | | | | |
| a. Duty to vote feel a duty | 47 | 37 | 24 | 18 | 6 |
| c. Interest in politics at least fairly | 76 | 60 | 57 | 43 | 14 |
| d. caring about outcome at least somewhat | 80 | 47 | 51 | 49 | 11 |
| e. Motivation to follow campaign strong | 43 | 48 | 32 | 21 | 6 |
| e. Altruism of politicians try to serve community | 52 | 42 | 43 | 30 | 22 |
| e. Efficacy of elections at least some | 59 | 60 | 32 | 43 | 38 |
| e. Effect of lowering voting age has effect on politicians | 73 | 65 | 76 | 71 | 39 |
| e. Attention to campaign arguments should pay at least some | 85 | 88 | 81 | 82 | 78 |
| C4. Customary Media Use | | | | | |
| a. Weight of viewing light or moderate | 73 | 70 | 81 | 60 | 76 |
| b. Frequency of newspaper reading daily | 65 | 65 | 49 | 53 | 32 |

cont...

TABLE 3 (cont'd.)

| Predictor Variable | Voting Pattern | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Consistent Voters[b] | Switching Voters[b] | Late Deciders | Contingent Abstainers[b] | Consistent Abstainers |
| D. Cross-pressure Variables | | | | | |
| 1. Press not reading opposition | 67 | | c | 44 | c |
| 2. Political contacts without dissent | 51 | 16 | c | 34 | c |
| 3. Constituency living in own party const. | 68 | 56 | c | 52 | c |
| E. Campaign Exposure Variables | | | | | |
| 1a. Party broadcasts seen at least one | 80 | 81 | 62 | 70 | 46 |
| 1c. Television news 4 or more days per week | 49 | 40 | 27 | 24 | 11 |
| 2a. Family discussion at least occasionally | 67 | 50 | 51 | 33 | 23 |
| 2b. Friends discussion at least occasionally | 75 | 81 | 81 | 62 | 46 |
| 2c. Other discussion at least occasionally | 78 | 79 | 83 | 64 | 49 |
| F. Campaign Issue Change | | | | | |
| 1. Taxes not change (in very important) | +7 | +9 | -5 | +19 | +11 |
| 2. Standard of living not change (in important) | -1 | +9 | +8 | +19 | 0 |
| 3. Prices not change | +8 | +5 | +3 | +15 | +23 |
| G. Campaign Reaction | | | | | |
| 2. Noticing of promises by winner noticed | 83 | 79 | 83 | 78 | 64 |
| 3. Strength of economy at least fairly strong | 72 | 53 | 68 | 54 | 57 |
| (N) | (220) | (43) | (37) | (86) | (37) |

a Only those predictor variables capable of being represented in terms of percentages are shown here; nine other variables are included in subsequent analyses.

b These patterns include only those choosing the Labor and Conservative parties in the pre-campaign interviews; Liberal party intenders have been eliminated from these analyses because of the small numbers involved.

c Cross-pressure variables are not relevant to these respondents.

TABLE 4

Proportion of Total Variance in Vote Turnout Accounted for by Grouped and Individual Variables by Pre-campaign Vote Intention, Leeds Young Adult Sample

| Predictor Variable Type | Pre-campaign Vote Intention[a] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Labor | | Conservative | |
| | % | % | % | % |
| A.Parental Political Characteristics (2)[b] | | 0.6 | | 0.0 |
| B.Structural Variables (6) | | 4.7 | | 19.3** |
| 1.Stratification (3) | 3.2 | | 17.4 | |
| 2.Other: sex, marital status, age (3) | 1.5 | | 1.9 | |
| C.Dispositional Variables | | | | |
| 1.Political System Dispositions (10) | | 11.8** | | 16.8** |
| a.Duty to vote (1) | 2.5 | | 3.2 | |
| b.Political knowledge (1) | 1.3 | | 5.7 | |
| c.Interest in politics | 1.4 | | 1.2 | |
| d.Caring about election outcome (1) | 4.3 | | 2.4 | |
| e.Other political dispositions (6) | 2.3 | | 4.3 | |
| 2.Party Variables (2) | | 0.2 | | 1.4 |
| 3.Prior Issue Orientations (3) | | - | | 0.7 |
| 4.Customary Media Use (2) | | 0.9 | | 3.8 |
| a.Weight of TV viewing (light)(1) | 0.3 | | 2.4 | |
| b.Frequency of newspaper reading (1) | 0.6 | | 1.4 | |
| D.Cross-pressure Variables (3) | | 2.7 | | 6.0* |
| 1.Press: opposition paper (1) | - | | 6.0 | |
| 2.Political contacts: dissenting (1) | 2.6 | | - | |
| 3.Constituency: opposition (1) | 0.1 | | - | |
| E.Campaign Exposure Variables | | | | |
| 1.Mass Media (3) | | 3.2 | | 4.5 |
| a.Party broadcasts seen (1) | 2.8 | | 0.3 | |
| b.Press election reading (1) | 0.4 | | - | |
| c.Television news (1) | - | | 4.2 | |
| 2.Interpersonal (3) | | 6.2** | | 13.3** |
| a.Family | 4.1 | | 11.6 | |
| b.Friends (1) | - | | 1.0 | |
| c.Other (1) | 2.1 | | 0.7 | |

cont....

TABLE 4 (contd.)

| Predictor Variable Type | Pre-campaign Vote Intention[a] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Labor | | Conservative | |
| | % | % | % | % |
| F. Campaign Issue Change (3) | | 2.0 | | 1.2 |
| G. Post-election Assessments (3) | | 5.4** | | 0.4 |
| 1. Campaign reaction score (1) | 2.3 | | - | |
| 2. Noted Conservative promises (1) | 0.2 | | 0.3 | |
| 3. Strength of the economy (1) | 2.9 | | 0.1 | |
| Total Accounted For | | 37.7 | | 67.4 |
| (N) | (215) | | (128) | |

a Table includes only young adult respondents choosing Labor or Conservative Parties in the pre-campaign interview. Liberal party intenders were excluded because of the small numbers involved.

b Numbers in brackets indicate how many individual variables have been included in the particular category.

* proportion of variance accounted for is significant at the .05 level for this group of variables.

** proportion of variance accounted for is significant at the .01 level for this group of variables.

TABLE 5

Proportion of Total Variance in Vote Turnout Accounted for by Communication Variables by Pre-Campaign Vote Intention, Leeds Young Adult Sample

| | Pre-Campaign Vote Intention | |
|---|---|---|
| | Labor % | Conservative % |
| C4. Media Predispositions (2) | 0.9 | 3.8 |
| D1. Press Cross-pressures (1) | - | 6.0 |
| D2. Political Contacts Cross-Pressures (1) | 2.6 | - |
| E1. Campaign Exposure Mass Media (3) | 3.2 | 4.5 |
| E2. Campaign Exposure Interpersonal (3) | 6.2 | 13.3 |
| | 12.9 | 27.6 |

TABLE 6

Proportion of Variance in Turnout of Pre-campaign Vote Intenders Accounted for by Grouped Variables: Leeds Young and Older Adult Samples Compared

| Predictor Variable Type | Sample: Young Adults | | Older Adults | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| A.Parental Political Characteristics (2) | | 0.2 | | 0.9 |
| B.Structural Variables (6) | | 4.7 | | 10.8 |
| 1.Stratification (3) | 3.5 | | 2.2 | |
| 2.Other: sex, marital status, age (3) | 1.2 | | 8.6 | |
| C.Dispositional Variables | | | | |
| 1.Political System Dispositions (10) | | 13.0 | | 3.6 |
| 2.Party variables (2) | | 0.3 | | 3.0 |
| 3.Prior Issue Orientations (3) | | 0.6 | | 5.1 |
| 4.Customary Media Use (2) | | 1.5 | | 0.1 |
| D.Cross-pressure Variables (3) | | 2.4 | | 1.3 |
| E.Campaign Exposure Variables (6) | | 9.6 | | 3.9 |
| 1.Mass Media (3) | 2.9 | | 1.6 | |
| 2.Interpersonal (3) | 6.7 | | 2.3 | |
| F.Campaign Issue Change (3) | | 1.7 | | 0.2 |
| G.Post-Election Assessments (3) | | 1.6 | | 0.1 |
| Total Accounted For | | 35.6 | | 29.0 |
| (N) | (343) | | (130) | |

TABLE 7

Pre-campaign Vote Intenders and Non-intenders Comparison: Proportion of Variance Accounted for by Grouped and Individual Variables, Leeds Young Adult Sample

| Predictor Variable Type[b] | Pre-campaign Report[a] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vote Intenders | | Non-vote Intenders | |
| | % | % | % | % |
| A.Parental Political Characteristics (2)[c] | | 0.2 | | 1.1 |
| B.Structural Variables (6) | | 4.7 | | 0.8 |
| 1.Stratification (3) | 3.5 | | 0.8 | |
| 2.Other: sex, marital status, age (3) | 1.2 | | - | |
| C.Dispositional Variables | | | | |
| 1.Political System Dispositions (10) | | 13.0 | | 38.9 |
| a.Duty to vote (1) | 2.9 | | 3.5 | |
| b.Political knowledge (1) | 2.3 | | - | |
| c.Interest in politics (1) | 1.6 | | 10.7 | |
| d.Caring about election outcome (1) | 3.7 | | 9.0 | |
| e.Other political dispositions (6) | 2.5 | | 15.7 | |
| 2.Party Variables (2) | | 0.2 | | 6.9 |
| 3.Prior Issue Orientations (3) | | 0.6 | | 1.1 |
| 4.Customary Media Use | | 0.1 | | 0.4 |
| a.Weight of TV viewing (1) | - | | 0.2 | |
| b.Frequency of newspaper reading(1) | 0.1 | | 0.2 | |
| E.Campaign Exposure Variables | | | | |
| 1.Mass Media | | 2.9 | | 9.2 |
| a.Party broadcasts seen (1) | 1.6 | | 3.7 | |
| b.Press election reading (1) | - | | 5.2 | |
| c.Television news (1) | 1.3 | | 0.3 | |
| 2.Interpersonal (3) | | 6.7 | | 4.2 |
| a.Family (1) | 5.7 | | 1.2 | |
| b.Friends (1) | - | | 3.0 | |
| c.Other (1) | 1.0 | | - | |
| F.Campaign Issue Change (3) | | 1.7 | | 6.6 |

cont.....

TABLE 7 (contd.)

| Predictor Variable Type[b] | Pre-campaign Report[a] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vote Intenders | | Non-vote Intenders | |
| | % | % | % | % |
| G. Post-election Assessments (3) | | 1.9 | | 4.8 |
| 1. Campaign reaction scores (1) | 0.9 | | 2.3 | |
| 2. Noted Conservative promises (1) | 0.3 | | 1.2 | |
| 3. Strength of the economy (1) | 0.7 | | 1.3 | |
| Total Variance Accounted For | | 32.0 | | 74.0 |
| (N) | | (343) | | (73) |

a The vote intenders include those young adult respondents who chose either the Labor or Conservative parties in the pre-campaign interview; the vote turnout for them is between those who remained voters and those who abstained on election day. Non-vote intenders are young respondents who had no party choice in the pre-campaign interview; for them the comparison is between the late deciders who voted on election day and the consistent abstainers.

b Since the cross-pressure variables were not relevant to the non-intenders, they have not been included in this table for either sub-sample.

c Numbers in brackets indicate how many individual variables have been included in the particular category.

TABLE 8

Order of Party Election Broadcasts Viewed during Campaign by Consistent and Contingent Major Party Supporters, Young Adult Sample

| Broadcasts in Order of Transmission | Whole Sample % | Consistent Conservatives % | Contingent Conservatives % | Consistent Labor % | Contingent Labor % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labor 1 | 35 | 42 | 29 | 43 | 36 |
| 2 | 25 | 27 | 10 | 29 | 24 |
| 3 | 30 | 28 | 26 | 34 | 15 |
| 4 | 32 | 36 | 16 | 40 | 22 |
| 5 | 39 | 44 | 23 | 41 | 18 |
| Con. 1 | 36 | 45 | 19 | 33 | 16 |
| 2 | 17 | 30 | 3 | 18 | 9 |
| 3 | 26 | 41 | 13 | 26 | 16 |
| 4 | 38 | 48 | 19 | 44 | 20 |
| 5 | 37 | 60 | 26 | 43 | 33 |
| Lib. 1 | 24 | 26 | 6 | 33 | 26 |
| 2 | 19 | 23 | 19 | 22 | 11 |
| 3 | 35 | 34 | 29 | 40 | 24 |

TABLE 9

Party Preferences of Youth Sample Members, Autumn 1971,

by 1970 Campaign Developments from Voting Intent to Reported Vote

| 1970 Campaign Developments | 1971 Party Preferences[a] | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conservative | Labor | Liberal | Don't know/ None | N |
| | % | % | % | % | |
| Consistent Conservatives | 73 | 15 | 3 | 9 | 78 |
| Consistent Labor | 5 | 87 | 2 | 7 | 131 |
| Consistent Liberal | 5 | 10 | 76 | 10 | 21 |
| Contingent Conservatives | 29 | 33 | 5 | 33 | 21 |
| Contingent Labor | 13 | 79 | 3 | 5 | 38 |
| Contingent Liberal | - | 25 | 25 | 50 | 4 |
| Inter-party Switchers | 25 | 44 | 25 | 6 | 32 |
| Late Deciders | 12 | 32 | 12 | 44 | 25 |
| Consistent Abstainers | 3 | 31 | - | 66 | 29 |

[a] Percentages total 100% reading from left to right

TABLE 10

Average Reaction Indices for Party Election Broadcasts of B.B.C. Viewing Panels in Four British Elections [a]

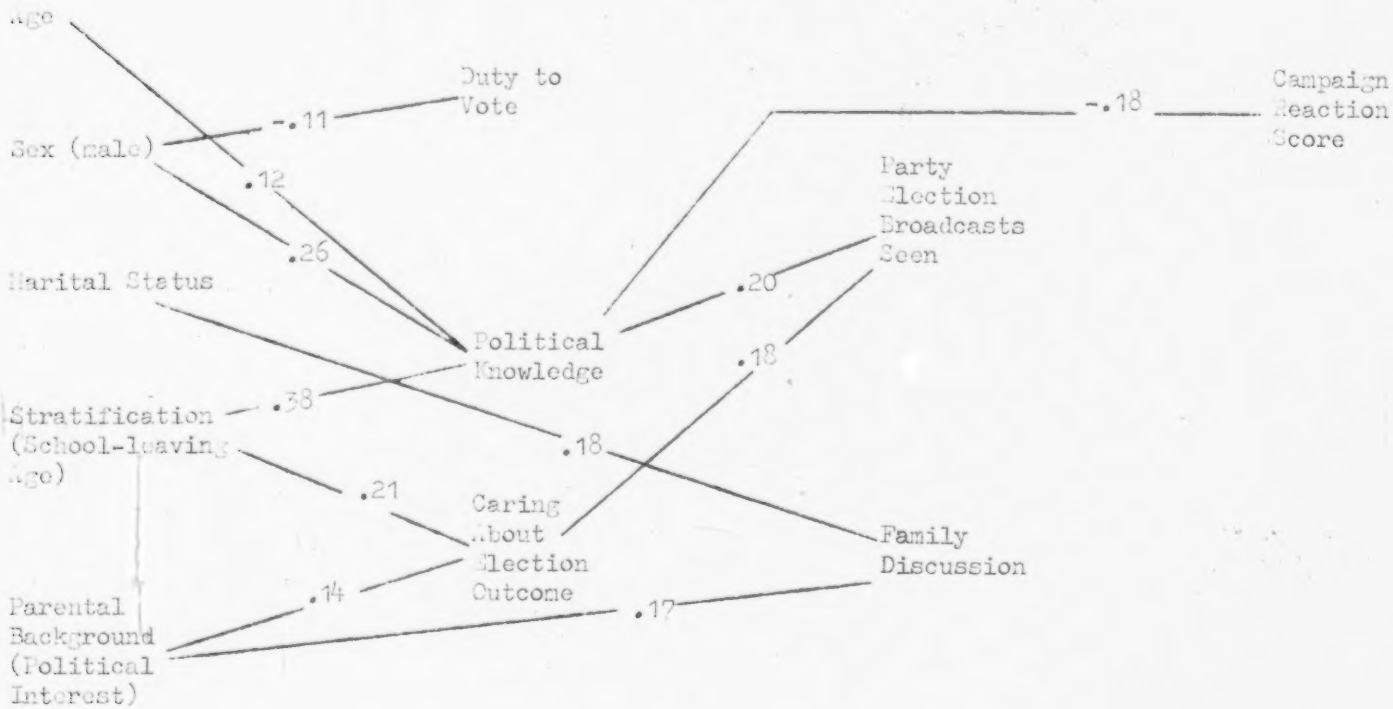
| Party broadcasts by: | Ratings by: Supporters | | | | Opponents | | | | Uncommitted | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 |
| Labor | 74 | 72 | 67 | 63 | 44 | 42 | 38 | 32 | 57 | 57 | 48 | 44 |
| Conservative | 73 | 66 | 65 | 65 | 45 | 38 | 38 | 34 | 55 | 53 | 48 | 41 |
| Liberal | 69 | 71 | 66 | 60 | 51 | 53 | 50 | 42 | 55 | 58 | 55 | 47 |

a Reaction indices are calculated from the panel members' use of a rating scale and range from 0 to 100.

The data above have been abstracted from four separate reports, prepared after each election campaign by the Audience Research Department of the BBC, on the basis of questionnaires completed by members of its Viewing and Listening Panels.

FIGURE 1

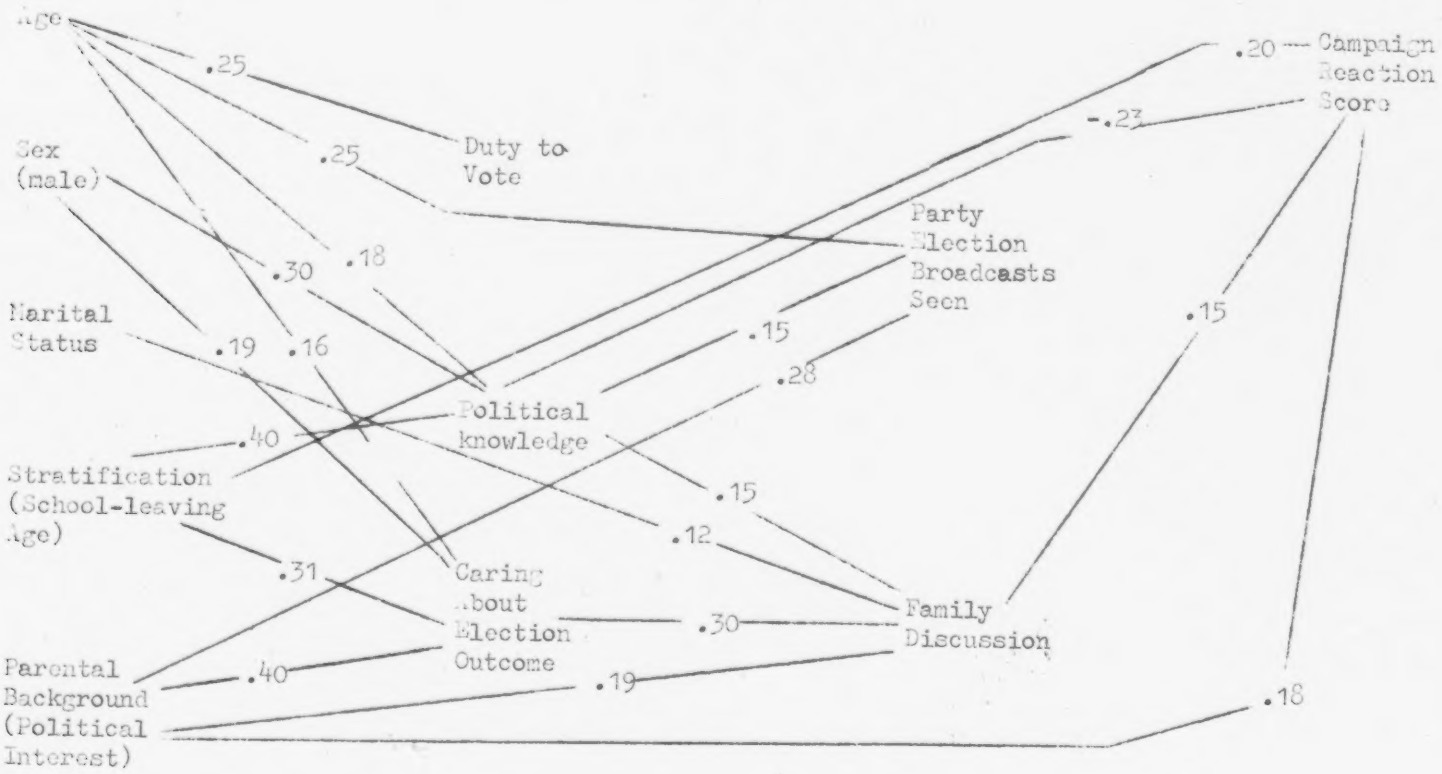
Indirect Paths Towards Electoral Participation - Labor Intenders[a]




a Among the variables depicted in this figure, the main direct contributors to Labor turnout were duty, knowledge, caring about the election, family discussion, party broadcasts seen and campaign reaction scores.

FIGURE 2

Indirect Paths Towards Electoral Participation - Conservative Intenders[a]




a Among the variables depicted in this figure the main direct contributors to Conservative turnout were stratification, duty, knowledge, caring about the election and family discussion.

APPENDIX

Summary of Measures Used as Predictors

of Turnout, Leeds Young and Older Adult Samples

| Predictor Variable Type | How Measured |
|---|---|
| A. Parental Political Characteristics | |
| 1. Parental interest in politics | Very, fairly, not much interested |
| 2. Parents' parties | One parent with preference or not |
| B. Structural Variables | |
| 1. Stratification | |
| a. Father's occupation | Non-manual or manual |
| b. Own occupation | Non-manual and student or manual |
| c. School leaving age | 15, 16, 17+ |
| 2. Other | |
| a. Sex | Male or female |
| b. Marital status | Married or single/widowed/divorced |
| c. Age | Continuum: 18-24 |
| C.1. Political System Dispositions | |
| a. Duty to vote | "You should vote only if you want to" or "Everybody has a duty to vote" |
| b. Political knowledge | Score 0-9 for correct answers to questions on party politicians and policies and on political concepts |
| c. Interest in politics | Very, fairly, not much |
| d. Caring about election outcome | Care who wins great deal, somewhat, not very much |
| e. Altruism of politicians | "Most politicians are out to serve the community" or are "more out for themselves". |
| e. Motivation to follow campaign | Index of no. of reasons for watching party broadcasts endorsed to no. of reasons for avoiding them endorsed: strong, medium, weak. |
| e. Efficacy of elections | Give ordinary people big say, some say, little say in how country is run. |
| e. Effect of lowering voting age | Will make politicians pay more attention to young people's views or not. |
| e. Attention to campaign arguments | Voters should pay a lot, some or little/no attention. |

| Predictor Variable Type | How Measured |
|---|---|
| e. Issue sensitivity | Total number (out of 23) of issues endorsed as very important for next government to tackle. |
| 2. Party Variables[2] | |
| a. Attitude to own party | Score +3 to -2 based on application of three positive and two negative statements as true/not true of party. |
| b. Attitude to own leader | Score +3 to +21 based on semantic differential ratings of three scales loading high in factor I (evaluation): straightforward, likeable, warm. |
| 3. Prior Issue Orientations | |
| a. Bread and butter issues | Score +6 to +12 for regarding as very important issues associated in cluster analysis: prices, taxes, jobs, housing, welfare service, nuclear war. |
| b. Social welfare issues | Score +4 to +8 for clustered issues of: educational opportunity, hospital spending, improving race relations, education spending. |
| c. Law and order issues | Score +4 to +8 for clustered issues of: capital punishment, unofficial strikes, student demonstrations, colored immigration. |
| 4. Customary Media Use | |
| a. Weight of TV viewing | Heavy or not, based on number of nights per week and number of hours per night usually watch |
| b. Frequency of newspaper reading | Heavy, some or none, based on number of days usually read. |
| D. Cross-Pressure Variables | |
| 1. Press | Only read opposition paper, read no party paper or read papers of both sides, and only read own paper. |
| 2. Political contacts | 0-3 cross-pressures if a parent or spouse support opposing party and if have opposition friend(s) without supporting one(s) |
| 3. Constituency | Resides in constituency won by opposition |
| E. Campaign Exposure Variables | |
| 1. Mass Media | |
| a. Party broadcasts | No. of party broadcasts seen of 14. |

| Predictor Variable Type | How Measured |
|---|---|
| E.1.b. Election news reading | Score 0-6 based on estimated frequency of reading of campaign stories and amount of attention paid. |
| c. Television news | Average no. of main evening news bulletins. |
| 2. Interpersonal | |
| a. Family | Frequency of weekly talk about election with family members: quite often, 2-3 times, occasionally, none. |
| b. Friends | Frequency of weekly talk with friends. |
| c. Others | Score 0-2 for mentions of election discussion with workmates/schoolmates or neighbors. |
| F. Campaign Issue Change | |
| 1. Taxes | Regarded important post/not pre, no change, or regarded important pre/ not post. |
| 2. Standard of living | As above |
| 3. Prices | As above |
| G. Post-election Assessments | |
| 1. Campaign reaction score | Score 8-24 taking account of how felt about five negative and three positive statements about politicians' campaign behavior: felt strongly, crossed mind, never occurred to me. |
| 2. Noted Conservative promises | Consider winning party had made "firm promises during the campaign, which it is now committed to carrying out". |
| 3. Strength of the economy | Very strong, fairly strong, DK, rather weak, very weak. |

a For the late decision analysis, party variables were measured by subtracting the score for one side from that of the other.